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TORONTO -- The results of a new study  
Property Crime in Canada: an econometric study  
could have profound implications for the design  
and direction of property crime research. This  
is the first attempt, using Canadian data and  
econometric techniques, to study property crime  
as rational economic activity.

Supply-of-offences functions for five types  
of property crime are specified and estimated  
using provincial data for 1970-72.

The model and results of the study differ in  
several major ways from previously published  
studies of supply-of-offences equations.

For example, most previous studies assumed  
that prospective offenders consider only the  
probability of serving time as a risk variable,  
and so would not distinguish between the risk of  
being caught and the risk of being convicted. The  
authors have shown that, in Canada, both the  
probability of apprehension and the probability of  
conviction have a substantial negative impact upon  
crime rates for most types of property crime -- with  
the conviction rate showing the stronger influence.

over

The generally significant finding of researchers in the U.S. and U.K. that sentence length inversely affects the crime rate does not appear for any of the crimes investigated in this study.

The results also indicate that estimating supply-of-offences functions over such general, or aggregate, categories as 'property crime' can lead to unjustified generalizations about particular types of crime.

Since most published studies use aggregate property crime as a dependent variable, these results also have implications for the design of future research.

The economic study is the second in a series by the Ontario Economic Council aimed at stimulating interest in issues arising in the public sector. The authors, K.L. Avio and C.S. Clark, are members of the economics departments at the universities of Victoria and Western Ontario, respectively.

The publication is available at \$5 a copy from the Ontario Government Bookstore, 880 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1N8 or the University of Toronto Press, 5201 Dufferin Street, Downsview, Ontario M3H 5T8.

Forthcoming publications in the series include --  
Daly and Globerman: Tariff and Science Policies: applications of a model of nationalism; Melvin: The Effects of Energy Price Changes on Commodity Prices, Interprovincial Trade, and Employment; and Hartle: A Theory of the Expenditure Budgetary Process.